

CD NO.

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# PARTY ELECTION SYSTEM IN RUMANIA

One of the most significant measures in the development of internal party democracy was the decision of the Central Committee of the PMR to have free elections of party officials. Elections were scheduled for 3 December 1950, in conformity with Articles 22 and 28 of the PMR Statutes, which give each voter the right to a secret and individual vote.(1)

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Criticism of Former Party Committees

At the various plenary sessions during 1950, political leaders discussed problems of organizing production, encouraging innovators, and appraising production management. Examples of mistakes committed by former party officials were cited: During the election meeting at Vulcan, party members strongly criticized the activity of the old committee, the indifference it displayed during general elections, its failure to increase labor productivity, and its neglect in qualifying young workers. An immediate end to these errors was urged. New committees and officers were elected, with the result that Soviet work methods were applied.(2)

At the election meeting at the Polytechnical Institute, party members criticized the old committee for failing to spur students to better learning, perfect attendance, and better marks. The old party committee of the 23 August Plant was also vigorously criticized, at the recent election conference, because all normal party activities had been left to the secretary, who was unable to cope with the amount of work.(3)

A number of violations of internal party democracy occurred at election time. Some raion committees attempted to control the meetings at every step. They wrote the reports of the primary organization bureaus, selected in advance those taking part in discussions, arranged for predetermined nominations, and the like.

Those in charge of the meetings often violated the party's internal democracy by confirming the nominations of candidates without the consent of the general membership, by rejecting suitable candidates, and by failing to take an individual vote count on objectionable candidates. For example, at the meeting of primary organization No 3 in the Ministry of Justice, the chairman of the presidium arbitrarily rejected the renomination of the agitator. Prior to a meeting of the primary organization of the Santierele Centrale ITB (ITB Centre's Workshops), the chairman of the presidium designated in advance the 11 members who were to take part in the discussion. Similarly, the CFR (Rumanian Railways) Grivita Rosie Workshops party members were denied the right to nominate candidates of their choice.

Another failure of party democracy is illustrated by the party officials who dislike criticism. They prevent party members from indicating shortcomings, on the pretext that criticism shakes the leader's authority. For example, at the primary organization meeting of the Intrepinderile de Oglinzi (Mirror Enterprises) of Bucharest, a member was cut short by the chairman of the presidium when he started to criticize the bureau of the primary organization. The same thing happened in primary organization No 3 at Laminorul, where the chairman of the presidium interrupted a member who was criticizing the secretary of the primary organization.

Serious violations of the Central Committee's directives on internal party democracy were committed in the determination of the quota of delegates to be sent to party conferences. Some raion committees in Bucharest disregarded the right of the primary organizations to send delegates to the raion conferences. Thus, in Grivita Rosie Raion, the IREB (Regional Electrical Enterprise of Bucharest) primary organization was denied the right to send delegates to the raion conference.

These violations of internal party democracy are due to insufficient political training of activists, and even more, to a lack of understanding of the Central Committee's directives.(1)

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Type of New Officials Elected

Newly elected officials are, in most cases, leaders in production, innovators, men who enjoy the esteem and confidence of the people. Many of the old committee members who showed qualities of leadership were also re-elected. However, the majority of those elected are new men with healthy spirit and strong devotion to the party.

Although a number of undesirable elements were removed, reactionary candidates still won in some cases. Thus, at the election party committee at the National Printing House, party members unmasked and expelled from the party former legionnaires who tried to break the unity of the working class, as well as those who had shown nationalist tendencies. Furthermore, in some primary organizations the spirit of revolutionary vigilance had not been aroused sufficiently. At the Uniunea Muncitorilor Cooperative, a member of doubtful past had been elected as delegate. Similar incidents had occurred at other enterprises, where new elections had to be held to replace ineligible candidates.(1)

Results of the Elections

It was generally agreed that the system of electing rather than appointing party officials led to a growth of the party classes and to an improvement in teaching techniques. Political agitation among the people improved considerably, and the primary organizations made increased efforts in agitation work and instruction of agitators.

Another result of the 1950 elections was increased propaganda work. Interest in this work was manifested by the increased number of members enrolled in party courses--64 percent of all party members, in comparison with the 48 percent enrolled in 1950.

At the same time, elections drew a greater number of members into the life of the party. In the past, members of primary organizations did not have specific tasks assigned to them and, therefore, took no active part in party life. However, after elections, the number of active party members increased to 10,000 in the Bucharest municipal organization. At the Industrial Bumbacului (Cotton Industry Enterprise) the number of active party members increased 130 percent, and at a match factory the number increased 100 percent.

In the primary organization at Dynamo, where only a few members were active at meetings before the elections, nearly 100 members, out of the 250 present, spoke at meetings after the elections. They criticized the shortcomings of the bureau and secretary of the primary organization, made concrete suggestions for improved production processes, and requested removal of domineering members of the bureau.

At the meeting of the primary organization at Vasile Roita, only a few members used to participate in the discussions, and they were always the same ones. After elections, however, 15 out of the 30 present spoke in criticism of existing conditions. There are many examples of improved attendance even at the general meetings of the primary organizations. In the primary organizations at Grivita Rosie and Formarea Trenurilor only 50 percent of the party members attended the meetings before the elections, whereas since December 1950, 75-90 percent of the members attend regularly.

Still another achievement of the elections was the increase in the number of members who paid their dues regularly. For example, at Steaua Rosie the number of members paying dues on time increased from 63 percent to 80 percent. Similarly, at Armatura the number increased from 73 percent to 93 percent.

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Another item of importance was the removal of individuals who had violated party discipline or who were of bourgeois origin. This action brought considerable improvement in the social composition of the party leadership.

The new party officials strengthened the spirit of responsibility in party leadership and gave the activists a deeper understanding of the demands of the rank and file. These officials developed a spirit of initiative, which necessarily improved the quality of their work. For example, the first secretary of the Gheorghiu-Dej Raion Committee was criticized at elections for being vain and for doing unsatisfactory work; as a result, he began to improve his methods and to reorganize the entire bureau of the raion committee in an orderly fashion.

The raion committees' increased supervision over primary party organizations is another direct result of the 1950 elections. Delegates at the raion conferences of the party criticized the primary organizations' bureaucratic methods of leadership and the lack of permanent liaison between the raion committees and the primary organizations. Liaison had been maintained only through the instructors of the committee, and usually in a hurried manner. Since the elections, the secretaries and other members of the raion committee bureaus have visited regularly the primary organizations and given them assistance.(1)

#### SOURCES

1. Bucharest, Lupta de Clasa, Nov/Dec 1951
2. Bucharest, Scanteia, 18 Nov 50
3. Ibid., 19 Nov 50

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